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ABSTRACT

In many classrooms, the issue of emotional legitimization is often forgotten, but in the distance education setting, two limitations highlight this issue even more. The distance education classroom lacks proximity and eye contact, which are pedagogically important as they prompt anxiety in students and draw them into learning. Rather than leading students toward active engagement, the distance education classroom leads them to a state of emotional paralysis. Distance education is not necessarily a total failure. Rather, it prompts the question: What type of inquiry is legitimized in education which reinforces emotional acquiescence at best or induces emotional paralysis at worst? Teachers should acknowledge and work through anxiety, because legitimizing anxiety can keep students from becoming paralyzed or entrenched in dominant definitions of subjectivity. (EF)

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Distance Education: Expressing Emotions in Video-Based Classes
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In the traditional—if one can call it that—two-way interactive distance education classroom, there is a console at which the professor stands and delivers her lecture. Accompanying this console is a "control center," by which the professor can manipulate camera views and angles, the computer and its projection equipment, a fax machine, an overhead, a phone, and sometimes more. The students who are physically present generally sit in stadium seating somewhere near the professor, but this does not guarantee that the professor will address them directly. This is because, to accommodate the remote students, the professor must look at a camera.

It is this possibly alienating layout that intrigues me about the pedagogy of distance education, and makes it different from any other pedagogical situation. If we understand that, as Lynn Worsham tells us, "the discourse of emotion is our primary education (primary in the sense of earliest and foundational)" (122), then this unyielding layout of the distance education classroom should give us pause to consider what kind of emotional disciplining gets done. If "Emotion appears as a phantom limb," as Worsham refers to it, because it is "more nearly felt than precisely seen, and" because it "remains undertheorized and mystified" (138), then we should work to make visible what unilaterally gets forgotten in most classrooms, but especially in the distance education classroom: what kind of emotional work gets legitimated.

I locate my inquiry in the distance education setting because there exist at least two specific limitations regarding this kind of classroom that do not exist elsewhere. These are:

Proximity and eye contact. We inherently know that both provide connection among people, but in the distance education classroom both are severely and sometimes permanently compromised. Yet we all know of the pedagogical importance of these two things, especially as they prompt anxiety in students and get them back to the business of learning. I'm sure all of us could share a story about how a teacher's look or nearness stopped us in our deviant little tracks. I remember what mortification I felt when I was "busted" with a look that could kill by my fifth grade teacher for staring at the clock. You might imagine that this was an unjust incrimination—we know that students check the clock routinely. But this wasn't quite routine. Having just learned about resting heart rates in gym class and, having been bored with the class, I decided to take my pulse for a few minutes. When she saw me, Ms. Iaquinta snapped me into shape with a steely look and a fierce, "What are you doing?" As you can imagine, I redoubled my efforts for the rest of the class to study diligently, for I was appropriately disciplined. But it's also true that my anxiety at being "observed," not unlike one in Foucault's panopticon, had a dual effect: not only was I forced to submit to the dominant pedagogy that mandated a particular knowledge production and practice, but, importantly, my boredom also indicated to the teacher that a rupture in the success of her pedagogy had occurred.

Looking back at this moment, we can see that this rupture should have prompted my teacher to reexamine her teaching strategies. I was, after all, engaged in an experiential form of learning since I was applying what I had just learned in gym class. Plain and simple, her class was boring. Her observation of my boredom should have compelled her to critique her pedagogy just as it disciplined me. This kind of self-reflexivity, not unlike what Virginia Kuhn says is especially possible in an online course, is clearly available to us in traditional classrooms.

It is my contention, though, that, in the distance education classroom, the pedagogy of the emotions is especially mystifying because professors' ability to witness moments of anxiety is hampered. Much work has been done regarding students' anxieties about technology, as well as other more general anxieties like shyness, interpersonal communication, and public speaking. But little work has been done to chart the effects of anxiety in distance education. Professors cannot adequately observe, number one, the physically present students because of their need to look at a camera. And, number two, they cannot adequately observe the remote students due to either the camera quality or angle of orientation. A wide shot shows all students but none in particular. A tight shot shows one student closely, but ignores all others. Since I agree with Megan Boler, who says that, in education, "affective production occurs in even the most sterile and rational classrooms" (15), the question for me then becomes: What happens with anxiety in this kind of classroom?

We must be cautious in considering anxiety because it can be quite ambiguous. On the one hand, it can lead to the undesirable emotion of panic. But, on the other, it can be quite productive. Anxiousness about an early morning meeting gets up us on time, anxiousness for approval and good grades induces students to study, anxiousness about tenure motivates faculty to publish, anxiousness about landing a tenure-track job prompts dissertators to stop "researching" Entertainment Tonight for insight into mass culture and work on their dissertations. Freud says that "Anxiety has an unmistakable affinity with expectation" (158). In fact, Freud distinguishes between advantageous anxiety and debilitating anxiety. One kind, "Neurotic anxiety, is anxiety about an unknown danger" (159). The second kind, "objective anxiety, is anxiety about a known danger" (159). We can easily see how objective anxiety is productive and useful in disciplining appropriate pedagogical responses. For example, the

University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee's introductory composition courses include portfolio evaluations in which a committee of outside instructors deems each student's work as passable. This obstacle looms large in students' minds as a known danger. Without fail, every semester students ask how many people on average pass. This usually occurs toward the end of the term, right at the time when students begin to care that others are reading their work and when they get especially anxious about their writing.

But unknown dangers can lead to paralysis. In a distance education classroom, where proximity and eye contact are limited, it is more difficult for the professor to observe in detail students' reactions to pedagogical practices. Students are neither disciplined nor affirmed by proximity or eye contact as regularly as in other pedagogical situations. At first glance, we might suppose that this situation encourages a critique of the dominant pedagogy because students are free from observation. But they are also free from contact with the professor. This pedagogical situation therefore maintains pedagogical hegemony by "'shaping' or 'winning' the consent of the oppressed" (Boler 7).

One might argue, though, that in the traditional classrooms where everyone is physically present not everyone enjoys sustained eye contact. And likewise, as highly skilled television watchers, even one direct look into the camera by the teacher may make a connection with the student viewers. But the two-way interactive distance education classroom frames anxiety in such a way as to delegitimate or even deny it. Any emotional resistance that students or teachers experience must be rationalized as a personal experience. Freud writes that "Anxiety is. . . on the one hand an expectation of a trauma, and on the other a repetition of it in a mitigated form" (161). Contact of various kinds can interrupt repeated expectations or repetitions of trauma, but the limited quantity of both eye contact and, especially, proximity force the stakes much higher.

We hope as teachers that students, when they have experienced anxiety, can move "from passivity to activity [as] they attempt to master" the subject (162). But their ability to do so in the distance education classroom is limited.

Rather than leading students toward active engagement with the emotional or semantic work at hand, the distance education classroom leads them to a state of emotional paralysis. Any anxiety felt is directed inward and individualized, not outward toward the pedagogical situation that discipline students' behavior. This even more troubling when one considers Jegede and Kirkwood's study that shows distance education students "were on the whole more anxious about their studies at the end of the semester than at the beginning" (279). The absent presence of emotions is made clear in the rush to make higher education available remotely. Alison Jagger notes that emotions "are wrongly seen as necessarily passive or involuntary responses to the world" (137). She argues, conversely, that the emotions "are ways in which we engage actively and even construct the world. They have both 'mental' and 'physical' aspects, each of which conditions the other" (Jaggar 137). In other words, emotions work in tandem with the physical classroom to make pedagogy possible.

Consider for a moment a student, in a distance education setting, who would like to question the bias a professor has in representing history, for instance. That student must interrupt a pedagogy that has been, by necessity, precisely preplanned. For remote students to see the dissenting student, the camera must be repositioned accordingly. The dissenting student, meanwhile, cannot adequately see the remote students—and perhaps even the professor—to gauge approval. In this situation, what capacity is there for pedagogical improvisation, on either side of the control center? What capacity is there a meta-discussion about how the class interrogates its subject? And how can the professor, who is fully occupied with her curriculum

and the equipment, observe moments of anxiety in her students, moments that might indicate a pedagogical rupture? And what does this paralysis mean for "People who experience conventionally unacceptable," or what Jagger calls "outlaw," emotions? People who often are "subordinated individuals [and] who pay a disproportionately high price..." (Jaggar) for their emotions? The obstacles and silences of emotions are more obstructive for those with a diverse cultural background.

Mind you, I do not mean to suggest the total failure of distance education. Rather, I mean to ask: What kind of critical inquiry is legitimated when two-way interactive distance ed, at best, reinforces emotional acquiescence or, at worst, it induces emotional paralysis? Unlike the electronic classroom that Virginia analyzed, the two-way interactive distance education classroom extends and intensifies the kind of passivity found in traditional classrooms.

Worsham states that the difficulty of challenging dominant emotional pedagogy is "to find a way to work on emotion through emotion" (127). I suggest today that in anxiety we find an emotion that can indicate a rupture in pedagogy—one that indicates a trauma has occurred for both the student and the professor. This felt moment indicates where a new way of thinking is needed to respond to the pedagogical crisis.

We should not be afraid as teachers to acknowledge and work through anxiety, especially when we're living in a culture disinclined to experience anxiety, as evidence by the spate of solutions for Social Anxiety Disorder. Legitimizing anxiety can keep students from becoming paralyzed by inactivity or entrenched in dominant definitions of subjectivity, namely middle-class, white, able, heterosexual male. This move is linked to democratic goals in education where structures of power can be investigated, exposed, and resisted. Wendy Brown writes that "Freedom is a project suffused not just with ambivalence but with anxiety, because it is flanked

by the problem of power on all sides: the powers against which it arrays itself as well as the power it must claim to enact itself" (Brown 25). The pedagogy of disorientation to which Ingrid referred fundamentally involves anxiety, and nowhere is this emotion more elusive than in the distance education classroom where proximity and eye contact—two key tools of anxiety production—are minimal.

Our panel today has argued that we must become conscious of the emotions in the classroom. My concern is that the basic layout for a distance education classroom induces emotional and intellectual passivity. This materiality does not encourage students to consider how they are being disciplined intellectually and psychologically, let alone emotionally. Working on the emotions through emotion "allows us to explore," as Megan Boler states, "the revealed 'space' between ideology and internalized feeling" (13). Like bitterness, which Sue Campbell argues is collaboratively formed, anxiety in the classroom calls for "a *full social accountability on everyone's part for the interpretive context*" (Boler 14). Looking away from cameras, notes, screens, machines—for anxiety—in both traditional and electronic classrooms, can make the emotions visible for teachers and provide opportunities for pedagogical improvement through accountability. I disagree with Jegede and Kirkwood who say that anxiety "needs to be eliminated or at least reduced to the barest minimum within the distance learning mode, if learning is to be made meaningful" (279). It is *through* anxiety and *through* recognition of the emotions that we can make learning meaningful.

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